

APPLICATION
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TITLE: CARDHOLDER FOR PICTURE FRAME

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Cardholder for Picture Frame

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application serial number 29/173,406, filed on December 26, 2002.

BACKGROUND

5 Photographs, artwork, and other memorabilia are often displayed in frames for decorative or protective purposes. These frames, such as a conventional picture frame, are generally configured be mounted on a wall or to stand on a flat surface so that the object displayed in the frame is easily viewable. While the object displayed in the frame may be viewable, the details identifying that object (e.g., name, date, location, author or artist, etc.)
10 may be unknown or no longer memorable to the viewer. For example, a significant passage of time may cause a viewer to no longer recall the exact location or date on which a photograph was created. Alternatively, photographs of family members may be passed down to subsequent generations, and a viewer may not know the exact identity of the person shown in an older photograph or the date on which the older photograph was created.

15 A conventional method for identifying an object in a frame is to transcribe a handwritten note on the reverse side of the displayed object. For instance, a person may record a note on the backside of a photograph that describes the name of the person in the photograph, the date that the photograph was created, and the location shown in the photograph. A problem arises, however, when such a photograph (having a handwritten note
20 recorded on the backside) is displayed in a frame. If a viewer is no longer able to recall the details related to the framed photograph, the frame must be opened to reveal the backside of the photograph and the details recorded thereon.

 Another known method for identifying objects in a frames requires a label holder device, such as a metal label holder from the front side of a conventional file cabinet drawer,
25 that is attached to the front side of the frame. The identifying details of the object displayed in the front side of the frame are recorded on a simple label that is sized to fit within the label holder. Consequently, the viewer may look at the object displayed in the picture frame while simultaneously viewing the identifying details of the object. In general, the appearance of the label holder attached to the front side of the frame is obtrusive and may detract from the

viewing pleasure of the object that is being displayed. Furthermore, the appearance of a handwritten label on the front of the display may reduce the formal or stylistic appearance of the displayed object. Moreover, if the label is used to communicate a personal message from a person offering the framed object as a gift, exposing that personal message on the front side of the frame may be undesirable. For these reasons, consumers are often deterred from using a frame with a label holder attached to the front side.

SUMMARY

In accordance with certain embodiments of the invention, a device for retaining a card may include a frame having a front side and rear side. The front side of the frame may have a first viewing window that is operable to display an object from the front side of the frame. The device may also include a holder attached to the rear side of the frame so as to define a cavity to receive a card. The holder may have a second viewing window that is operable to display the card from the rear side of the frame. The holder may be substantially concealed from the perspective of a viewer exposed to the first viewing window in the front side of the frame.

In other embodiments, an apparatus for displaying an object includes a frame, a card, and a holder. The card may be reconfigurable between a folded and an unfolded state. The card includes an inner face that is substantially concealed when the card is in the folded state and a front face that is viewable when the card is in the folded state. The holder may be attached to the rear side of the frame, and the holder may include a mounting portion, an offset portion, and a second viewing window. The mounting portion of the holder may have a substantially planar rear face that is abutted against the rear side of the frame. The offset portion of the holder may have a rear face that is offset from and substantially parallel to the rear face of the mounting portion. The offset portion and the rear side of the frame may define a cavity for retaining the card. The second viewing window may be formed in the offset portion such that the viewing window is operable to display the card from the rear side of the frame when the card is retained in the holder. The holder may be operable to retain the card in the folded state in the cavity between the offset portion and the rear side of the frame.

The details of one or more embodiments of the invention are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, objects, and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the description and drawings, and from the claims.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

5 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a holder used accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

FIGS. 2A-C are perspective view of the holder from FIG. 1 that is attached to a frame in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

10 FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the holder from FIG. 1 and a card that may be inserted into the holder in accordance with another embodiment of the invention.

FIGS. 4A-B are perspective views of a card that may be inserted into the holder in accordance with yet another embodiment of the invention.

Like reference symbols in the various drawings indicate like elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

15 FIG. 1 shows a holder 10, which may be made of any substantially rigid material, such as metal, wood, or plastic and may have a substantially uniform thickness 12. The holder 10 includes an offset portion 20 that is configured to retain a card (not shown in FIG. 1 and described below in more detail) while a mounting portion 30 is secured to a mounting surface. The offset portion 20 is positioned with respect to the mounting portion 30 such that
20 the front face 21 of the portion 20 is offset from, but substantially parallel to, the front face 31 of mounting portion 30. Similarly, the rear face 22 of the offset portion 20 is offset from and substantially parallel to the rear face 32 of the mounting portion.

25 The holder 10 may be attached to the mounting surface using any fastener means, such as mechanical connectors, welding, or adhesives. The mounting portion 30 may include one or more apertures 34 for attaching the holder 10 to the mounting surface. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, each apertures 34 is configured to accommodate a fastener that secures the holder 10 to the mounting surface. Depending on the size of the holder 10 and the size of the fasteners that are used in conjunction with the apertures 34, the mounting portion may include landing areas 36, which the fastener heads may abut against. Moreover,

the rear face 32 of the mounting portion 30 may be substantially planar to facilitated attaching the holder 10 to the mounting surface.

A viewing window 24 may be formed in the offset portion 20 of the holder 10. The viewing window 24 is formed completely through the thickness 12 of the holder 10 and may be configured to any shape that facilitates the viewing of a card or label retained by the holder (not shown in FIG. 1 and described below in more detail). In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the viewing window 24 is substantially square-shaped having rounded corners. The viewing window 24 may not extend to the whole length or width of the offset portion 20, which creates a frame-like area in the offset portion 20 around the window 24. This frame-like area may retain the card or label in the holder 10 and prevent the card or label from escaping through the viewing window 24.

Referring to FIGS. 2A-C, the holder 10 is disposed on a rear side 42 of a picture frame 40 (FIG. 2A) such that the holder 10 is not viewable from a front side 41 of the picture frame 40 (FIG. 2B). The holder 10 is attached to the picture frame 40 using fasteners 37 that are inserted through the apertures 35 and into the rear side 42 of the frame 40. A support device 48, such as leg stand or a wall-mount hook, may be attached to the rear side of the picture frame 40. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 2A, the support device 48 is a leg stand that is adapted to posture the frame at an angled position such that the frame 40 may rest on a tabletop or desktop in an upright position.

As shown in FIG. 2B, an object 50, such as a photograph, piece of artwork, or other memorabilia, may be displayed from the front side 41 of the frame 40. The object 50 is viewable through a viewing window 44 in the front side 41 on the frame, and a transparent material, such as glass, may be positioned in the viewing window 44 to retain the object 50 in a desired position. Alternatively, the object 50 may be viewed from the front side 41 of the frame 40 without the need for a transparent material in the window 44. Because the holder 10 is attached to the rear side 42 of the frame 40, the holder 10 is substantially concealed from a viewer exposed to the window 44 and object 50 displayed from the front side 41 of the frame 40. As such, the holder 10 and a card (not shown in FIGS. 1-2) do not detract from the appearance of the front side 41 of the frame 40 or the object 50 displayed therein.

FIG. 2C shows a magnified view of the holder 10 and portion of the frame 40 from FIG. 2A. The rear face 32 of the mounting portion 30 of the holder 10 abuts against a

suitable mounting surface, such as a substantially planar portion of the rear side 42 of the frame 40. In this embodiment, the offset portion 20 of the holder 10 does not contact the rear side 42 of the frame 40 because the rear face 22 is offset from and substantially parallel to the rear face 32 of the mounting portion 30. Consequently, a cavity 28 is formed between rear
5 face 22 of the offset portion 20 and the rear side 42 of the frame 40 when the holder 10 is attached to the frame 40.

Referring to FIG. 3, a card 60 or other identifying label may be inserted into the cavity 28 (FIG. 2C) between the offset portion 20 of the holder 10 and the rear side 42 of the frame 40. The card 60 is preferably made of a material that is suitable to receive ink or
10 printer toner so that a user may record markings onto the card 60. The card 60 may be formed to have a thickness 62 that is slightly less than the size of the cavity 28 (FIG. 2C) such that the card 60 may slide snugly between the offset portion 20 and the rear side 42 of the frame 40. In certain embodiments, the card 60 may be a cardstock material having a paperweight between 40-lbs and 120-lbs.

The card 60 may be formed to have a shape that is moderately similar to the outer
15 border of the rear face 22 of the offset portion 20. In such embodiments, the junction between the offset portion 20 and the mounting portion 30 may act as a guide as the card 60 is inserted into the holder 10. When the card 60 is fully inserted into the holder 10, the viewing window 24 of the holder 10 exposes a front face 61 of the card 60. The front face 61
20 may have information recorded thereon, such as a name, date, location, or artist, which may be viewed through the window 24 of the holder 10.

The offset portion 20 may include a guide extension 26 that protrudes outward and away from the viewing window 24 of the offset portion 20. As perhaps best shown in FIG. 3, the guide extension 26 may facilitate the insertion of the card 60 between the offset portion
25 20 and the rear side of the frame 40. Because the guide extension 26 is offset from the rear side 42 of the picture frame 40 (FIG. 2C), a user may move the card 60 along the rear side 42 of the frame 40 until the card is properly positioned between the guide extension 26 and the frame 40. At that point, the card 60 may be inserted into the holder 10 by moving the card 60 into the cavity 28 between the offset portion 20 and the rear side 42 of the frame. Moreover,
30 the guide extension 26 may have at least one edge 27 that does not match the shape of the

card 60. As such, a portion of the fully inserted card 60, such as a corner 65, may be accessed by the user to facilitate removal of the card 60 from the holder 10.

FIGS. 4A-B show an alternative embodiment of the card 70 that may be inserted into the holder 10. In this embodiment, the card 70 is configured to be folded before insertion
5 into the holder 10. The card 70 may include a fold line 73 to facilitate adjusting the card 70 into a folded state (FIG. 4B). The card may be formed to have a thickness such that the card 70, when in a folded state, fits snugly between the offset portion 20 and the rear side 42 of the frame 40 (not shown in FIGS. 4A-B). In one embodiment, the card 70 is a card stock material having a single fold line 73 and a paperweight of about 45-lbs to 60-lbs.

10 Additionally, the card may be formed to have a shape, when in the folded state, that is substantially similar to the outer border of the rear face 22 of the offset portion 20.

The card 70 includes an inner face 74 where a personal or private message may be recorded. For example, a user may offer the frame and the object therein as a gift, and the user may record a private message to the gift recipient on the inner face 74 of the card 70.
15 Then the card 70 may be adjusted to a folded state so that the inner face 74 is substantially concealed from view. A different recording of general identifying information (e.g., name, date, location, or artist) may be recorded on the front face 71 of the card 70 such that the identifying information is viewable through the window 24 when the folded card 70 is fully inserted into the holder 10.

20 In some embodiments, the holder 10 may be attached to the rear side 42 of the picture frame 40 by way of the support device 48. For example, the holder 10 may be fastened to a substantially planar surface on the leg stand 48 (FIG. 2A), which in turn, is fastened to the rear side 42 of the frame 40. As such, the holder 10 would be disposed on the rear side 42 of the frame 40 such that the holder 10 is not viewable from a front side 41.

25 The holder 10 may advantageously be disposed on objects other than picture frames. For instance, the holder may be affixed to the reverse side of a decorative object or work of art having a reverse side substantially hidden from a normal viewing angle.

A single integral holder may include multiple cavities, offset portions and windows to permit the ready storage and removal of multiple cards. For instance, a single holder may
30 have two laterally adjacent offset portions to receive and display two cards juxtaposed one another. Alternately, a single offset portion may have dividing elements which define

multiple cavities, which may be parallel to one another and of varying depths or heights. In such a configuration, the window may be configured to display only the outermost card.

The holder 10 may be integrally formed with the frame or other structure to which it is affixed. For instance, in the case of a metal or plastic frame, a pocket or cavity with an optional window may be formed on the reverse side of the frame.

The information recorded on the card may be something other than identifying information, such as a purchase price for the artwork framed therein or a marking unrelated to the framed object.

The extension portion may be reconfigured or omitted entirely. The guide portion may advantageously be configured to receive one or more indicia such as brand identification or custom inscription.

The holder 10 may be any size to the extent that the holder is not larger than the rear side of the frame to which it is mounted. The shape the holder is not limited to the illustrated embodiments; for example, the holder may have a decorative style to better match that of the frame. The overall shape of the holder in elevation view may be substantially circular or any other desired shape.

The frame can be advantageously configured to display paintings or other works of art, photographs, greeting cards, diplomas, certificates, and the like. In these various embodiments, the cardholder can be sized to accommodate larger or smaller cards, depending on the nature of the text necessary to adequately describe the object in the frame.

A number of embodiments of the invention have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, other embodiments are within the scope of the following claims.